

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4803

INFO USMISSION NATO

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C O N F I D E N T I A L REYKJAVIK 1234

EXDIS

DEPT PASS TO COMICEDEFOR, CINCLANT AND SECDEF

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MARR IC NATO

SUBJECT: IDF RETENTION NEGOTIATIONS - CONVERSATION WITH PROGRESSIVE
PARTY CHAIRMAN OLAFUR JOHANNESSEN

1. I HAD PLEASANT PRIVATE HALF-HOUR CONVERSATION WITH
FORMER PRIME MINISTER OLAFUR JOHANNESSEN WHO IN THE NEW
GOVT IS MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND JUSTICE. WE TALKED
MOSTLY ABOUT THE DEFENSE POLICY OF NEW GOVT. I TOLD HIM
USG WAS GRATEFUL FOR THE MODERATING ROLE HE PLAYED UNDER
HIS GOVT WITH RESPECT TO IDF RETENTION AND THAT WE WERE
WELL AWARE OF HIS PERSONAL PRO-USA, PRO-NATO, PRO-IDF
POSTURE THROUGHOUT THE PAST TWO YEARS. HE REPLIED THAT
ALTHOUGH THERE ARE DIFFERENCES ON MANY ISSUES BETWEEN
HIS PARTY AND INDEPENDENCE PARTY, HIS ATTITUDE IS TO MAKE
THE NEW COALITION SUCCESSFUL. WITH REGARD TO DEFENSE
ISSUE, HE PERSONALLY SUBSCRIBES TO THE NEW DEFENSE POLICY
AND WILL LEND HIS SUPPORT TO IT.

2. HE SAID FONMIN AGUSTSSON TOLD HIM OF OUR CONVERSATION
EARLIER THIS WEEK. HE HOPED UNDER SECRETARY SISCO COULD
FIND THE TIME TO RESUME NEGOTIATIONS WHILE AGUSTSSON IS IN
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NEW YORK THIS MONTH SO THAT THE DEFENSE ISSUE CAN BE

SETTLED AND THE NEW GOVT CAN THEN DEVOTE ALL ITS ENERGIES TO ICELANDS SERIOUS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. HE SAID HE WOULD SUPPORT WHATEVER IT TAKES TO REVOKE THE ARTICLE VII INVOCATION SO THAT THE PROVISIONS OF THE NEW DEFENSE POLICY CAN BE IMPLEMENTED EXPEDITIOUSLY. HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THERE MAY BE A PROBLEM ON THE AIRPORT SEPARATION BUT FELT IT NEED NOT NECESSARILY BE INSURMOUNTABLE AND THUS NO REASON TO HOLD UP REVOCATION OF THE ARTICLE VII ACTION. WITH RESPECT TO MILITARY MANPOWER REDUCTION HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD WE ALREADY HAD A MEETING OF THE MINDS ON THIS AND ADDED THAT WE SHOULD GO SLOWLY BECAUSE ICELAND LABOR IS STILL IN CRITICAL SHORT SUPPLY. HE ALSO ADDED HE UNDERSTOOD WE WERE NEVER INTERESTED IN KEEPING MORE MILITARY THAN NECESSARY IN ICELAND AND THAT FURTHER MILITARY MANPOWER REDUCTIONS WILL BE MADE IN THE FUTURE ON USG INITIATIVE WHEN DEFENSE CONSIDERATIONS PERMIT.

3. DURING CONVERSATION HE COMPLIMENTED PRESIDENT FORD ON THE MANNER IN WHICH HE IS UNDERTAKING THE PRESIDENCY AND WISHES HIM GREAT SUCCESS IN HIS ATTACK ON INFLATION. HE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN ANY POLICIES OR PROGRAMS UNDERTAKEN IN USA WHICH CAN BE APPLICABLE TO ICELAND.
IRVING

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED COMICEDEFOR, CINCLANT AND SECDEF.

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